

*On a Nun Who Painted a Buddha Image out of Gratitude
for the Four Kinds of Blessings and Gained
a Power to Show an Extraordinary Sign¹*

In a village of Yuge, Wakae district, Kawachi province 河内國若江郡遊宜村,² there lived a highly disciplined novice nun 練行沙彌尼.³ Her name is unknown. She lived in a mountain temple at Heguri 平群,⁴ and, organizing a devotees' association,⁵ painted a Buddha image with a picture of the six existences⁶ in order to give thanks for the four kinds of blessings.⁷ When completed, it was enshrined in the temple after the dedication ceremony.

Meanwhile she left the temple, going from place to place on errands. During that time the picture was stolen, and she looked for it in vain, crying pitifully. Still leading the devotees' organization, she wanted to free living beings,⁸ and the members went to Naniwa 難波 to visit the market. When they saw a basket in a tree, they heard various animals crying in the basket. They waited for the owner to return, for they thought there must be animals in the basket and they wanted to buy them and set them free. Meanwhile, the owner returned. When they said to him, "We heard some animals in your basket, and we have been waiting to buy them from you," the owner said, "No, there is nothing alive in it." The nun did not give up, however. She continued begging till the merchants around them said to the owner, "You should open the basket." The owner was frightened, and he ran away, leaving the basket. When they opened it, they discovered the stolen image. In joy and tears the devotees cried, "Since we lost this image, we have been longing for it day and night. Now, by chance, we have found it. How happy we are!" When the merchants heard this, they gathered around and praised the nun's perseverance.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 17).

2. The southern part of present Hachio-shi, Ōsaka-fu.

3. 沙彌尼 *shamini*, a transliteration of Skt. *śāmaneriḱā*, originally a nun under the age of twenty who keeps the ten precepts, but in this case the same as a nun. Cf. Chap. I(1)a, n. 10.

4. Present Heguri-mura, Ikoma-gun, Nara-ken.

5. 知識 *chishiki*; see Chap. I(1)d, nn. 110, 111.

6. 六道 *rokudō*; see Chap. I(2)a, n. 126.

7. 四恩 *shion*, that is, the blessing of the parents, lords, all sentient beings, and the Three Treasures; or mother, father, Tathāgata, and monks. See Chap. II(2)a, nn. 69, 70.

8. 放生 *hōjō*; see I, 7, n. 12.

joyfully the nun and the others set living beings free, held memorial services, and reconsecrated the image in the original temple, where it remained an object of devotion for both clergy and laity. This is indeed a miraculous event.